

## ISSUE VII Spring 2009

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### Equal Opportunity Employer/Program

Under Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, the Department prohibits discrimination in admissions, programs, services, activities, or employment based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, and disability.

The Department must make a reasonable accommodation to allow a person with a disability to take part in a program service or activity. For example, this means if necessary, the Department must provide sign language interpreters for people who are deaf, a wheelchair accessible location, or enlarged print materials. It also means that the Department will take any other reasonable action that allows you to take part in and understand a program or activity, including making reasonable changes to an activity. If you believe that you will not be able to understand or take part in a program of activity because of your disability, please let us know of your disability needs in advance if at all possible.

To request this document in alternative format or for further information about this policy, contact the Division of Developmental Disabilities ADA Coordinator at (602) 542-6825; TTY/TTD Services: 7-1-1.

## Medication Administration

— Sandra J. Verheijde, R.N.  
DDD QUALITY ASSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

In certain circumstances, unlicensed personnel may be trained and authorized to administer medication in residential care settings. All orders should contain the patient's name, the date and time when the order is written, and the signature of the ordering clinician. Caregivers administering medication are responsible for checking that these components are present and clear. Also make certain of the following:

- ◆ the name of the medication is accompanied by the dosage, or how much of the drug should be given;
- ◆ the route of administration, or how the medication should be given (i.e., by mouth, as ear drops, etc.); and
- ◆ the frequency, or how often the drug is to be given.

Some medications need to be adjusted according to the blood level required to maintain a stable state for the consumer. Seizure medications are an example of a medication that may require intermittent laboratory tests be done in order to check the blood level of the medication to ensure the level is not too high (therefore dangerous) or too low (not enough to control the seizures).

It is never a good idea to miss a medication. For some medications; however, it may be dangerous to miss even one (1) scheduled dosage.

#### Example:

Coumadin is a medication that is given to thin the blood. Lab work is done frequently to ensure the blood is thin enough but not so thin the person is in danger of hemorrhaging (bleeding profusely). When the blood is tested, the medication may be increased or decreased, depending on the lab work. If a person has missed doses of the Coumadin, the lab result will not be accurate, and the person's dose of medication may be significantly increased which will then put them at risk for hemorrhage.

If a medication is missed for some period of time, it can be very dangerous to resume the medication at the original dose. Any time a medication is missed for a period of time, even twenty-four (24) hours, a call should be made to the physician to find out what dose of medication should be given.

It is very important for anyone giving medication to read the instructions on the bottle. When the prescription is picked up, the pharmacist will often provide detailed instructions both verbally and in writing:

**PLEASE LISTEN CAREFULLY  
AND READ THE INSTRUCTIONS.**

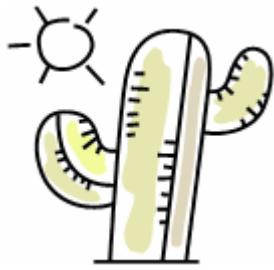
There are so many different medications available with considerable information required for safe drug administration. As a result, it is important to have access to a current medication reference such as the *Physician's Desk Reference* or other reference handbooks about medications.

Administering medication is a big responsibility. The responsibility goes beyond simply handing someone a pill. Knowing about the medication, the side effects, and any required lab work is essential for keeping everyone safe.



**REMINDER**  
**In the event of any consumer emergencies,**  
**CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY!**  
**Do not call the group home manager or other staff first.**

# Just Around the Corner: SUMMER



— Sandra J. Verheijde, R.N.  
DDD QUALITY ASSURANCE ADMINISTRATOR

Hard as it is to believe, summer is just around the corner. For those living in Arizona that means "HOT!" For most, the dry heat of summer in Arizona is just something we deal with. The healthy human body keeps a steady temperature of 98.6° Fahrenheit. In hot weather or during vigorous activity, the body perspires (sweats). As the perspiration evaporates it cools the body. For persons with medical conditions such as poor circulation, heart, lung or kidney disease, high blood pressure, or any illness that causes general weakness, the body is not able to handle a challenge such as extended periods of intense heat.

The Quality Management staff would like to remind everyone of the following:

Always use sunscreen when outdoor activities are planned. Sunburn decreases the body's ability to perspire.

Drink adequate amounts of water. Avoid caffeine or alcohol as these can cause dehydration. Thirst is not an adequate indicator that a person needs fluids. One sign of dehydration can be dark, concentrated urine.

Plan activities later in the day rather than during the peak daylight hours.

Be sure to wear shoes. The pavement in Arizona can reach temperatures of 145 degrees.

**Never** leave persons or pets in a locked vehicle.

Wear lightweight loose fitting clothing and a wide brimmed hat.

*Prevention is the key to avoiding hyperthermia which can be a life threatening condition.*

## MRSA Precautions

—Annette Lammon-Belcher, R.N.  
DDD HEALTHCARE SERVICES MANAGER

Methacillin-Resistant Staphylococcus Aureus (MRSA) is a bacteria that causes skin or wound infections that do not respond to penicillin/methicillin drugs. MRSA is among us and has been around for the past three (3) decades. It is found in hospital settings as well as in the community. Community acquired MRSA may be spread on gym equipment, daycare toys, sports teams and personal care items. Prevention is the most important step to control MRSA.

### The best way to prevent MRSA is:

Frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and warm water or an alcohol based hand sanitizer.



newsletter is presented by Central Office Quality Assurance Unit of the Division of Developmental Disabilities. Articles are researched and compiled by Quality Assurance staff. Any questions or feedback, please contact Steve Stencil at [SStencil@azdes.gov](mailto:SStencil@azdes.gov) or 602-817-6700.

## MRSA Precautions

(cont'd)

Rub hands together for fifteen (15) seconds or longer to kill bacteria.

Keep cuts and scrapes clean, dry, and covered until healed.

Keep drainage from wound away from other people or objects. If contact occurs wash thoroughly.

Cover their mouth with a disposable tissue for MRSA lung infections.

Do not share personal items such as towels, washcloths, bar soap, or razors.

Use warm water and detergent for washing clothes, towels and linens. Use hot air in dryer instead of air drying.

Take antibiotics as prescribed and until finished to ensure the bacteria has been eliminated.

If you do not see your health care providers wash their hands before visiting with you, ask them to wash in front of you.

Source: [www.azhha.org](http://www.azhha.org)

## Be Alert!

—LaWanna Bellerive

DDD CENTRAL OFFICE QUALITY ASSURANCE OFFICER

Scald injuries occur when contact with hot liquid or steam damages one or more layers of skin.

### How long does it take to scald a healthy adult:

- 1 Second @ 155°       5 Seconds @ 140°
- 1 Minute @ 130°       5 Minutes @ 120°
- Safe Bathing Temperature @ 100°



### Main sources of scald injury:

- HOT TAP WATER      • HOT BEVERAGES
- HOT FOOD      • STEAM

### Most Frequent Scald Injury Victims and Reasons:

#### YOUNG CHILDREN

(curiosity, imitation, limited understanding of danger, limited ability to react quickly to hot contact, thin skin causing deeper burn)

#### OLDER ADULTS

(thin skin, reduced mobility & agility, reduced ability to feel heat due to health conditions or medications)

#### PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

(sensory impairment, mobility or other physical impairment, diminished cognitive abilities)



### Common Sites where Scald Injuries occur:

KITCHEN or DINING AREA – spills while handling or moving hot foods and liquids; and

BATHING AREA – inability to remove self from hot water.



### Protecting Children and Vulnerable Adults:

HOUSEHOLD CHANGES: Put away tablecloths, use spill-resistant travel mugs, establish safe hot water temperature, install tempering valve or safe faucet and shower heads, use non-slip bath/shower mats, and install grab bars in shower stalls.

EVERYDAY PRECAUTIONS: Keep caregivers informed, turn pan handles way from stove front, and observe safe microwave oven practices.

SUPERVISION: Supervise young children at all times. Never hold a child while preparing or serving hot food or when drinking a hot beverage. Keep hot food and liquids high and out of reach of young children.